

These Things

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Summary: Lithuania writes to Poland during the armed resistance against Soviet occupation, 1944-1953

1. Chapter 1

I am tampering with new things...

* * *

><p>July 30, 1944<p>

Dear Poland,

It is with great bewilderment that I should address this letter to you. Rest assured, it will never reach your hands, for I do not intend to send it. As to the manner in which I have chosen its receiver, it is only natural for my pen to scrawl out your name. You were chosen merely by instinctual circumstance. Despite our recurring conflicts these past decades, there is no other being at mind to which I can confide in my troubles. Surely you understand the depth of my transgressions.

I write this deep in the _Dainavos giria,_ where we played in our youth. My men sit here and keep company with one another; we know we will not win this fight. But we are not irrational. We are not ill-minded. It is with the conviction of our hearts that we have entered this fruitless war. We fight to show the West, the Soviet Union, and ourselves that we will not be taken easily, as spoils of war, the baubles of our captors. My people will remember this struggle to maintain our honour, I promise you.

I have not eaten in days, but my stomach burns only with nationalism - a fierce pride has seized my entire being.

It is good that your eyes will not glance across this page, for now I

see the mess it is quickly becoming. I cannot keep my fingers from shaking; the pen wobbles vagrantly in my hand, for such is the joy of writing in my own language, at will and in the open, for the first time in years. You never bothered to learn my alphabet anyhow. It is no matter. You were concerned with your own matters of consequence, yes?

Forgive my poorly-exercised grammar, the repetitive fragmentations of my thoughts. These things that press against my lungs take me in the dead of night like a stolen kiss. They rattle my chest and toss my heart into the throes of aching desire.

I live in shades of black and white, but I dream in colour.

Sincerely,

Lietuvos.

* * *

><p>Dainavos giria - the Dianava Forest is located in a remote region of southern Lithuania and holds over 1,000 sq. km. of pine forests, deciduous groves, and swampy things, along with a wide variety of flora and fauna.

Toris' writing is very flowery.

2. Chapter 2

August 2, 1944

Dear Poland,

I hope you do not expect a letter every day. I cannot maintain such a trivial activity on a daily basis. In any case, life is far too monotonous to share daily. You would quickly tire of my descriptions of the same forest trails and the same sky and the same meals. I still tread through the _Dainavos_ region, but I cannot tell you any more of my whereabouts, in the event that I am captured. The stakes are high. We are given the orders to prevent ourselves from being captured alive - at any cost. Just this morning, we walked into a nearby village and found the bodies of two brothers laid out on display there. Their faces were gone.

Our squad quite enjoys singing; it adds a bit of colour to every evening, and lifts our spirits. I have decided to copy down one of our favourites, _AlytÄ_, in English:

_Soldiers are stepping, row after row, _
>To defend our dear land,
>The Lithuanian country.
>A flock of birds, dressing the sky,
>Sing and fly overhead.

Leaving, the son comforted his mother:
>Please don't be sad while I am gone.
>Goodbye, dear mother, goodbye, dearest,
>Maybe we will see each other again

>after the cruel war.

_Near my father's grave, there, _
>next to the chapel,
>I gave an oath to be a son of Lithuania.
>Once vowed, will not repeat again -
>I will fight to defend our dear land,
>the Lithuanian country.

My love will not visit my grave,
>She won't deck my grave with flower blossoms,
>Steel bullets will visit my grave,
>Will comfort me forever lying in the ground.

It both gladdens and wrenches my heart to hear these men - not my brothers but my sons - utter these words with such conviction.

I fear for each of them.

Sincerely,

Lietuvos.

* * *

><p>Most partisans taken hostage were brutally tortured and murdered before their bodies were displayed as a warning in the centre of their town or village; the Soviets then monitored the reactions of the citizens to find relatives and close friends of the "traitors to the state".<p>

A great deal of the resistance members killed themselves before they could be captured and interrogated because they knew it would save the lives of their families and fellow brothers.

'Abc' yes I did know that, thanks for reminding me ! Tolys or Taurys is his proper name by cultural rites, and I know that 'Toris' is a very rare spelling and uncommon title in Lithuania, but that's what I'm going with because to change it now would befuddle many things in my mind. :)

3. Chapter 3

August 8, 1944

Simonas Adomaitis - partisan
>1917-1944
Vilnius

Darijus Lukas - partisan
>1899-1944
Å iauliai

MarytÄ- - liaison
>1925-1944
Kaunas

I suppose I should inscribe the names of the fallen in my company from here on out. They will be listed in the margins of the paper with what little information I can recall without endangering their families - if they have any. For some, I have changed their names and hometowns for the sake of honouring their wishes; they deserve as

much.

Forgive me, I haven't the heart for proper greetings and introductions - the day has been long and painful. You understand this well.

We are lucky to have only lost three after intercepting a band of Reds who had found sport, like many of their comrades, in thieving away my citizens' possessions and belongings. They had been pillaging a village in _Suvalkija_ for a greater part of the afternoon.

Given to corrupt methods of obtaining what they so desire, the Ivans harass and spit, they beat the elderly and frighten children. Such brutal tactics only ease when a household patron is present to dissuade them with a bucket of homebrew and the important documents that are demanded of him. It is a common activity - a trait of sorts - that the Soviets have adopted. By day they steal, by night they arrest. Many of my children have lost sleep over this nauseating apprehension that now has become a permanent plague.

And so, today we decided to educate this afore-mentioned ragtag group of Reds on the consequences of beating and plundering our elders and our wives, our mothers and our tiny futures.

They opened fire on us inside a rickety man's home, killing said owner in the process. His name was Lukas, if I recall from the half-opened pile of mail that was sitting on the kitchen table with his undisturbed noontime meal.

Such violence was unexpected; most of the thieves we had previously encountered were yellow-bellied and easily scatted off. I had not anticipated such an act as this abrupt and needless crossfire which killed the man we intended to defend. The guilt weighs heavily now on my conscience, for would it have been better for him to lose his furniture or his very life?

In addition, little MarytÄ- was only nineteen, and had tagged along with us for a visit into town to collect rations and information from the front. Her midday adventure proved to be of great misfortune.

We eventually won our rightful victory, but it is a loss all the same, amplifying the pounding in my forehead that has festered there for weeks now; I remember it well from '41, but now it has grown into a frequent and daily onset of the constant bloodshed. I wish to record the feeling of death before I become numb to it.

On a brighter note, a few local liaisons have found an amusing solution to the tangled mess that is becoming my hair recently (I haven't got the heart to cut it, see). I look silly, like a young woman, with my hair braided into a bun atop my head. But it's functional, and I think you would quite like it.

Sincerely,

Lietuvos

* * *

><p>Because partisans lacked modern communication, as the Soviet

Union collected most household radios early on in occupation, the Forest Brothers developed an intricate network of messaging the old-fashioned way: with liaisons who passed important news about partisan activity from one headquarters to the next. Most of these messengers were village girls who, when captured, faced the same fate as men.<p>

The house raid described here was unusually fated; most, as Lithuania mentions, were sneaky plots lacking tactical skill or any kind of decency at all. Guns were used to intimidate, and far less often to kill.

Ivans and Reds were common slang terms for Soviet soldiers/Communist activists during occupation, particularly in E. Europe.

Alsooo, _Suvalkija_ is more commonly referred to as Sudovia, the southern region of Lithuania where _Tolys_ is still hanging around :) I might add that "Sudovians are stereotypically extreme skinflints; English jokes about Scots may be translated into Lithuanian by changing 'Scot' to 'Sudovian'."

>(I find this very funny)
While I don't know the whole history, I'd imagine that during this time Suvalkija was in possession of Poland (because Poland kind of absorbed most of southern Lithuania - the _southernmost_ of which is known today as "Poland's Lithuania") but lets pretend he is somewhere near Marijampolė- in the still-actually-mine countryside, yea?

End
file.